

# REWRITE



## The Magazine of Effective Writing

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### BREAK IN ON FEATURE ARTICLES

You would like to write. You are inexperienced and not at all certain whether you can make a go of it. Perhaps you are a housewife who needs extra money to finance such things as better education and summer camp for the children. Or perhaps your children are grown up and you have a few precious hours of leisure time you don't know what to do with. It may be you are a businessman or woman, who's always had a hankering to write ever since a story or essay you wrote in high school won that prize for special excellence.

Whatever the individual conditions, writing is a hobby with you that you would like to develop, or turn into a useful vocation, against the time when you retire and need a small activity as an outlet for your energy, or a means of eking out your reduced weekly stipend. You don't know a great deal regarding the commercial side of writing. You do know that most trades or professions require a certain amount of training. On the other hand you do not have much money to lay out, nor are you very clear in your own mind how or where you would spend this money, if you decided to invest in yourself as a potential writer.

What you would like to do, and have probably dreamed of doing as a result of reading some of the fancy figures about the amounts of money made by well known authors, would be to earn a few prizes or sell some articles, or stories, and thus make your writing "pay" for itself. You say to yourself that if you could earn even a few dollars, you would be quite willing to turn some of this money back in order to learn how to really write. This way you could make your writing serious business, as you have always dreamed of doing. From there you could go on and the sky would actually be the limit. No one knows how far you might go, if your streak of talent is—worth anything. Again, you are not certain, and wonder whether the gamble is worth trying.

Well, the answer is that only you can actually tell—by trying. But you have several avenues of approach open to you. You can really gamble, by dashing off a few stories which you send off post haste to the SATURDAY EVENING POST, COLLIER'S, COSMOPOLITAN or LADIES' HOME JOURNAL. And when these fledgling pieces come back, as they almost surely will by the law of averages, you can throw up the sponge and say with a disarming smile "Well, I guess I just did not have what this game takes." Or you can proceed more cautiously, but still gamble. You can admit that it is not likely you will be able to hit the slicks all at one crack. And so you waste a dozen years gritting your teeth and writing Confessions, which you hate, or shooting at the pulps and second rate general markets. A small sale now and then, whets your appetite for more punishment. Perhaps seeking in desperation an answer to the never failing tor-

rent of impersonal or anonymous rejections, you fall a victim to or make the rounds of a variety of schools, critics and agents, who either quickly display their own incompetent inability to help you, or following a brief eagerness to serve you, display a remarkable facility with the silent brush-off.

There is, however, a third and often more effective approach. It is via the feature article. It can be argued that many of us who wish to write, are by nature either fiction, or fact writers. To a certain extent I have come to believe this in a measure true. But after years of working with words and writers, I have also come to realize that writing occupies one corner of the entertainment World, Show Business. And whatever role you elect to play, the fundamental principles of telling a story, and of catching and holding the attention of a reader are very much the same.

And the vitally important factor in freelance feature article writing is that in addition to being a liberal education, giving you a background of information that is invaluable to the story-teller, it teaches you not only how to handle facts, but also words in the most efficient and agreeable manner. A good feature writer today must often use the technique of the fiction writer, but whether he actually does or not, he has learned a good deal about the art of dramatizing, and making his facts interesting and important to readers.

In the newspaper and magazine fields, the range and diversity of feature writing is enormous. There is a place for literally every writer, who can put words together, and who has the imagination to have something interesting to say. Whether your bent lies in the direction of the humble filler, editorial or column writing, or the vastly larger field of the straight feature article you can fit in, if you have the energy and the will to scratch, to make a niche for yourself. A niche that can be as big or as little as you care to make it. I recall my father commenting after my first sale, while I was yet an undergraduate, "You've got a sideline there that can be lifelong source of pocket-money." I had no intention of allowing it to be only that. But I have often recalled that remark as I have paused from some larger job, to dash off the by-product feature article, which occurred to me, and which was so easy to write.

The great advantage of newspaper-writing, I have found as a teacher of writing, is that it gives the inexperienced writer the feeling of what it means to appear in type. You have a totally different slant on your writing when you have actually been published. Just the same as does the public speaker when he at last faces his first audience instead of his mirror. Then for the first time you get the feel of words. You are really using them making them count. So your style firms up.

REWRITE

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MAKE      William E. Harris,      KEEP  
THE FREE    Elva Ray Harris,      AMERICA  
WORLD STRONG    Editors.      CLEAN

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Guest Editorial

"WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?"

To my way of thinking, there are three over-riding facts of life in international affairs today. First, the rulers of Soviet Russia are striving for world domination by any and every means at their disposal. Second, most of the people of the world are hungry, literally and figuratively hungry. These two facts are directly related. For the men in the Kremlin are shrewdly exploiting the hunders of the peoples of the world to further their own drive for world mastery.

Of these two facts, I would rate the fact of world-wide hunger as more significant in the long run than the threat of Soviet communism. For even if communism should disappear from the earth, even if the Soviet rulers should decide to use their power in the cause of peaceful cooperation, hunger, disease and poverty and ignorance would continue to plague most of the human family, & to invite other forms of violence and oppression. We cannot hope to be rid of human dictators and tyrants, until we wipe out the impersonal tyranny of hunger, misery and despair on which human tyrannies thrive.

The hope of the world for peace and a better life for all lies in the third great fact of life today; for the first time in history we have the power to stamp out hunger, as well as widespread disease and illiteracy. In my opinion, this third fact can be the greatest

single antidote to the other two. If the free peoples of the world use the power they now possess to create a better life for all—and use it cooperatively—they can rid themselves of conditions on which communism can and does thrive...

It will be seen that we Americans are ourselves, partly responsible for the fact that more than a billion people are now demanding what we have demanded and have proclaimed to be the most desirable human values. For 175 years we have been talking about men being created equal, about the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, about government of the people, by the people and for the people.

This is inflammatory talk. The only wonder is that it did not ignite fires of discontent and anger sooner among great masses of people afflicted with hunger, disease, and poverty.

Well, the fires are burning now. And we helped to feed them with our ideas, and our own example of self-government, economic progress and social justice. What are we going to do about it?

Dr. Henry G. Bennett

Note: this is a talk Dr. Bennett gave before a group of educators in Texas, shortly before he was killed in an airplane accident in Iran. Pres. Truman spoke the perfect epitaph for this former president of Oklahoma's A. & M. University when he said: "Dr. Bennett understood how people can work miracles when they share knowledge to help each other." It was to share his knowledge and activate his belief that the Point 4 program need not be an "Operation Santa Claus", but rather could be and is under effective administration, a program of tangible value in providing "new ideas and new resources for America in addition to building friendship for America all over the wide world", that he went to Iran.. He did something about "it".

For writers, he expressed in the talk that we have printed above, the backdrop against which all of us, if we are realists must inevitably write for the next 25 years. It is well to study them carefully and be prepared. We can do much to create a happy world.

"EISENHOWER FOR PRESIDENT"

Now that the General's hat is in the ring it would be well to consider our situation. And do it with care. Probably the method of that entry satisfied few people, least of all the General himself. Second, his philosophy is known to few persons, certainly not—the voters. He is a military man. His backers—aside from the politically ambitious men in politics, are not known. Will he be able to work well with the rest of the men making up our government? He is a hero, a good administrator (Dewey was those, but not a statesman). Is Eisenhower the big man we need?

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### FUNDAMENTALS OF GOOD POETRY

By Elva Ray Harris

### THE POET'S WORKSHOP

This month the Workshop discusses the poem by Gertrude L. Durand, entitled:

#### THE AGE OF NOISE

Day and night shrill telephones ring,  
Radios blare and shout and sing,  
Airplanes drone across the sky,  
Trucks and cars roar madly by;  
Day and night on the waiting hours  
Great clocks boom from city towers,  
Factory whistles wail and tear  
Ruthlessly through the helpless air,  
Insurgent armies meet and clash,  
Bullets zing and atoms crash...

Sometimes I long with nostalgic pain  
For the good old days to come back again,  
The blessed, peaceful days when noise  
Was mostly made by healthy boys.

To start the discussion off, let us begin by hearing from Mary Grant Charles, who never fails to send in her helpful comments on the Workshop poem up for analysis. She says "I can find little fault with this poem. It is good light verse with the necessary snappy ending. The only change I would suggest, I think, is in the first line. I would drop "shrill", as it is not necessary for the best, and telephone bells are shrill anyway."

Mrs. Tore B. Holmstrom is a new contributor to the Poetry Workshop this month (a ms. by her figured in the Fiction Workshop some time ago). So we welcome her comment: "The thought of the poem struck a responsive and sympathetic chord in me. I, personally, have a weakness for poems with a rhyme, so I liked the first stanza better. Note: 'again' is not too good a rhyme word to pair with 'pain'. If you read it aloud you will notice an entirely different rhythm or beat to the last four lines, that suffer in comparison then, with the first 10 lines. Line 12 is unusually long. I don't care for the words 'nostalgic pain'. All the poems seem to have pain, of some kind! A suggestion: if you'd revise the last 4 lines so as to have the same tempo as the rest of the poem, it would be perfect. For example, 'children shout' instead of the passive 'noise was mostly made'. It would be a lot of work to revise, and still keep the rhyme, but I think it would surely be worth the effort. I do like this poem the best of any that have appeared in REWRITE so far."

Next we hear from Clarence C. Adams: "To me this poem does not register. There is a lot too much cataloguing in the first stanza to make it interesting. There is a redundancy of 'ands', adjectives and trite word combinations in the first stanza that make it heavy and tiresome. A use of metaphors or similes

could have put life into this poem and made one feel the distress the author feels, because of the noise. No doubt the author was born and raised in the country or in a small town and now lives in the city. The second stanza suggests that. However, this stanza, also suggests that the author doesn't feel she can take things as they are, and longs, nostalgically, for the days of youth, & the time when noise did not bother her. It isn't a progressive thought. Rather, it is retrogression.

"The meter in the first stanza is basically trochaic, while the second stanza is iambic. This is rather an odd combination. It seems to me that the poem would have been better written if the meter had all been trochaic or all iambic. The rhyming is good. She has used closed couplets well.

"With a more careful selection of wordcombinations the author could have said all she had to say in at least eight lines."

Julia Polinski says: "I like this poem. The number of syllables in the lines vary, but that makes for more effective reading.

"The last four lines were especially appealing. When in the midst of it, the noise of healthy boys seems to be the farthest extreme from peace. Yet, in retrospect, it can be nostalgic & very blessed."

And from Bessie H. Hartling: "This is a realistic poem. The author has chosen her words well to convey the idea of noise. The verbs ring, shout, drone, etc., are almost deafening to the inner ear. Also the beheading of the feet in the initial words of that first stanza creates a staccato effect. Therefore, ...the contrast in the second stanza is indeed, a great relief. The reader is ready for the 'good old days', the 'blessed, peaceful days'. We can feel kindly toward the dear & healthy boys who are always making noise!"

"It would make smoother meter to say 'the shrill phones ring' in the first line. And 'great clocks boom' is a mouthful, but I can think of nothing more effective for the subject matter of this poem. 'Ruthlessly', and 'insurgent' are very effective. I would like 'How often' better than the word 'sometimes'. I would also prefer 'only' instead of 'mostly' in the last line.

"I enjoyed reading this poem, but I am so glad it ended like a peaceful river after the thundering roar of a waterfall."

Another contributor new to our Workshop is Starr Leonard, who says: "It seems to me like a very good poem, showing excellent action. I might change the line:

'Radios blare, and shout and sing'

to:

'Radios blare, shout, shriek and sing', as I think substituting another adjective— for the second 'and' would strengthen great-

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ly the line. But again, the author possibly might have intended to do this for emphasis of one kind or another."

Stanley M. Kenney comments: "The word 'drone' in the third line sounds rather tame compared with the 'clash' and 'wail' and 'tear' in the other lines. 'Whine' or 'scream' would seem to be better. With that exception, the first or main part of this poem is good.

"I find the quatrain rather lame, compared with that healthy zooming and clatter of the former. I believe this poem should come to an end with the same tone with which the author began it. The reflection and yearning could be more effective with two lines, instead of four. Such as: 'Oh, for these days when most the noise....Was made by healthy, happy boys!'

"The word 'sing' in the second line is weak also. Words like 'sting', 'fling', 'bing', I think, would be better. The fifth and sixth lines would be perfect but for the use of the word 'great'. It seems trite. 'Giant' would be more descriptive, don't you think?

"THE AGE OF NOISE" should begin and end, I feel, with a "bang".

So there we have a good slice of readers' comment. I should say "poet readers' comment. Nothing is ever cut-and-dried right or wrong about an intangible like writing, is it? And although that fact may be confusing to students of poetry, it is also comforting. Because if you do the best job you can, you will in all probability please someone.

In spite of the difference of opinion regarding this poem, there is some agreement. Two people gave suggestions for improving & strengthening the meter in the first line.. Three writers did not like the rhythm change between stanzas, while two more thought the change of pace to be effective. What do you think? Two persons were in substantial agreement as to the fact that some improvement of 'great clocks boom' should be made. And two thought the poem should be shorter.

I agree with Mr. Adams that this poem does not "come off". I think the presence of trite, pictureless words may be the reason. Though I do think Miss Durand used them deliberately, and perhaps with a little more luck, it might be that they would have been effective.

The last two lines of the first stanza do not belong in this poem. Up to those lines, the poem is set in a city and the noises are peacetime noises. Those last two lines appear to transport us to a battlefield where we wouldn't be hearing the telephones & the clocks, the radios, the factory whistles.

"Insurgent" is not the right word to suggest an army. Army discipline usually guarantees the opposite of "insurgent". While one army may appear to the other to be "in-

surgent", both could not be insurgent.

Regarding Mr. Adams' thought that this poem does not embody a progressive thought but rather one of retrogression, I would like to say that while the progressive type of poem is pleasanter to read, the retrogressive type can pack a wallop and can portray a universal feeling. Many people past forty or fifty or even younger, on a tired day, would find comfort in reading this poem and knowing it represented similar feelings to their own & "shared", on a universal basis by others. I am thinking of another poem by this author, which retrogresses so very well indeed that it shocks a reader, even a young reader, into stopping a moment to think about the coming of old age.

Here is the poem for discussion in April. It was sent in by Stanley M. Kenney.

## SPRING THOUGHTS

Once again new life is born  
Beneath the fury of winter storms;  
Once again life buried deep  
Stirs restlessly from winter sleep.

Keen pointed darts will penetrate  
Through walls now held in cold estate;  
Soon again the breath of spring  
Will weave the cloth to robe a king!

Deadline for comments: March 10th. (We're giving you as much time as possible because REWRITE is likely to be late and February is a short month. So, comment anyway and thus, help the author; and (2) get your comment in as soon as you can. But take time to make a thorough one. It will help you as much as the author. And send in your poems. Remember, a dollar is paid for each one used.

## CLOSING DATES ON PROSE WORKSHOPS

No. 9. Dramatic Scenario. An emotionalized "teaser" for a story you intend to write. Make an editor bite. Not over 100 words. \$1 will be paid for the one used. Closes: Apr. 10th, 1952.

No. 10. A Feature Filler. In not over 500 words (it should be less), something an editor will wish to use to fill space. Any idea or novelty. But make it memorable. \$1 is paid for each used. We hope most will sell. Closes: May 10th, 1952.

Question Box. Send in your questions, puzzles, problems. They will be discussed, in detail, in the July issue. Deadline: June 10th, 1952. Help us to help you.

Market Tip: BYPATHS, PATHFINDER, 1323 "M" St., N.W., Washington 5, D.C., will send a mimeo list of deadlines for Quips and Poems for the entire year 1952. This is a topical news magazine. You need this information to help you hit the bulls-eye. This is a high-pay market that lots of writers shoot at.

## REWRITE

### THIS IS DRAMATIC CONFLICT

The textbooks always urge you to use Conflict, Dramatic Conflict in all of the stories you write. It helps if you get the essence of it into your articles, poems, each and every piece of any kind of writing that you do. But in my experience very few writers understand clearly or have visualized a dramatic conflict that runs throughout what they write like a spine. They have a vague, unsure recollection that conflict is a disagreement. But they don't appreciate that a dramatic conflict is more than just a fight between two prize-fighters.

That is why we have always insisted that decision is involved. A true dramatic "conflict" represents a problem, an issue. It's a fork in the road where a person or a body of people must make a choice. They face the most important change they can at the moment imagine. It's like a fellow about to make a proposal to a girl, or a girl about to accept, or reject a proposal. In each case there is likely to be a tremendous change in the way of life. Even if the change does not occur, life will not be the same. That is decision that is meaningful, vital.

A conflict can only be great if the force on each side is great. If the stakes are important. A riot may cause a lot of damage & destruction, but it is not as dramatic as a struggle, let us say, between a small, proud free nation fighting for its life against a powerful, bullying dictator. And just as the quality and meaningfulness of the forces on each side help to shape significance, so too, does the duration of the struggle. A short, sharp conflict that is solved by a trick or surprise twist is not as enjoyable for your reader as a long, prolonged conflict, which tightens the screws inch by inch in a manner that seems inevitable and inescapable in its logic.

But it is the factor of placing two able, powerful forces in opposition and maintaining them throughout a story that seems to be the most difficult lesson for many inexperienced writers to learn. So many writers, it seems, cannot divorce themselves from looking at their story from only one direction. Which of course is that of their hero. They fail to be objective and think in terms of a character or opposing force that seeks, and struggles hard, to prevent the hero from achieving his goal.

To use an analogy, from long years of being stage manager for countless dramatic stories, it has become automatic for me, whenever I see a character moving in one direction, to devise a "hand-brake" that we pull to slow him up, to retard him and make difficult his progress. This is not because it gives me pleasure to see him fail, but just because I know what will make an audience of ordinary people sit up and be interested. I ask myself: "What is the opposing force?"

Another device I have learned always, and eternally to keep in mind is the idea of two extremes. Just as there is night and day or hot and cold, fast and slow, fat and thin, a similar set of opposite poles can and ought to exist in every story. Whether it be melodrama or intellectual high drama, there is the never-ending struggle between "good" on the one hand and "evil" on the other. What the MC desires and the reader believes is a good and satisfactory thing for him to gain is symbolical "Good". The opposite thing or force is "Evil". Between the two lies inevitably the no-man's land of conflict.

Now let us look at another analogy that I thought up recently, in order to help someone to see this eternal problem more clearly. You remember that the Devil took Christ up to a high place and offered him all that his heart desired, if he (Christ) would fall down and recognize the Devil's sovereignty. You see, even God understands the universal element of dramatic conflict. Well, let us, as an allegory, imagine that a man is walking across America from West to East. He is a strong, likable character and he is accompanied by a friend, whom we, the readers on the side-line recognize as the personification of good. Mid-way across the continent, perhaps somewhere in Kansas, they see a man approaching them. We recognize this man immediately as the personification of evil. He smiles good humoredly, slows down, attempts to pass the time of day with the two others travelling in the opposite direction.

Presently, he suggests that the hero turn around and travel West. The MC demurs, he's got objectives in the East, he likes the company he already has. The Devil offers larger and more alluring inducements. He coaxes and wheedles. He perhaps even threatens and attacks the MC's companion, seeking to discredit him. The Devil's campaign expands and develops both in breadth and intensity. You can picture the dramatic scene and write it in your own terms. You can build up the issue, making it more important and the ultimate decision on the part of the MC at once more difficult and imperative.

The point though, is that this is the way your story should always look to the reader as he pursues his way down the printed page toward the final line. Two strong forces in a desperate struggle. Each wishes to get on in the direction he is going. Neither intends to give ground. Both hope to win. They are poles apart, complete opposites. And in between them are all the possible gradations, that normally separate white from black. In selecting dramatic scenes, you seek to give the illusion of this underlying struggle between two opposing forces.

To do this effectively, you try to select, eliminate, intensify so as to identify both forces, to define clearly and forcefully the issue, and to make memorable the battle. It is your story. It is what you sell.

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HOW'S YOUR BATTING AVERAGE?

Here are the acceptances reported to us in the past month:

Florence M. Davis

Long Story: MODERN ROMANCES (Confession)

Linnea Staples:

Articles: YOUR DOG (May issue).

Poem: SHORELINER.

Lydia Lion Roberts

Features & Fillers: C.S.MONITOR, Boston GLOBE (Sunday), D.C.COKE PUB. CO. (5)

Helen Langworthy

Short Short Story: SO. FARM & HOME.

Feature: CHRISTIAN PARENT, Lansing Mich. STATE JOURNAL.

Wallace A. Ely

Story: YOUNG CRUSADER.

Marjorie S. Schuer

Poem: N.Y.TIMES.

Lillian Stickney

Articles: Boston POST, COLLECTOR-HOBBY-IST.

Poem: N.E.HOMESTEAD.

Frances Durland

Short Story: FORWARD.

Serial: GIRLS TODAY.

Lillian Everts

Poems: U. of K.C.REVIEW, EDUCATIONAL FORUM, SAT. REVIEW.

Carrie Esther Hammil

Poems: SCIMITAR & SONG.

NOTE: send in your news. Tell us what you know about markets. It helps us to help you and your note or someone else's may be that much-needed "cross-check" that enables your ms. to stick, or saves you time and money by crossing off a closed market, or one its no sense to waste time on. The best and most accurate market news is worth many dollars to you. You can help us to supply it. Be wise.

SHASTA PUBLISHERS, 5,525 So. Blackstone Ave., Chicago 37, Ill., with the help of the Pockett Books, is now offering \$4,000 for a Science Fiction novel. Must be original and unpublished. Closes: Aug. 1, 1952.

The Seabury Press, Greenwich, Conn., (Episcopal Church publication house) is now open for business...And the Methodist Pub. House at Nashville, Tenn., which publishes books, as well as magazines for children, has completed a \$2 million dollar expansion of its printing plant. Has doubled its "hard-bound" books capacity (now 100,000 weekly)...Ellin Kaufmann is now editor of the Peoples Book Club and Sears' Readers' Club. John Scott-McBain has become editor of Dell's paper reprint editions. NYC public school textbooks to be "reviewed" for "subversive" material. Good?

BEHIND THE NEWS FRONT

The Lauterbach Award, Room 507, 2 W. 45th St., NYC 36, is being organized in memory of Richard E. Lauterbach. It will be given annually to some writer whose writings have stood out during the previous year in the field of civil liberties. It is expected to be about \$1,000 or more. Interested persons are asked to pledge a fixed sum annually or a lump sum which can be used for the next 10 years. Donors may nominate persons they consider a likely candidate. (Before February 1, annually.) During February a committee of "four members of the Authors' Guild Council & one member of the Board of Directors of Lauterbach Award, Inc. will nominate at least two and probably four more candidates. Then, the membership of the Authors' Guild will elect the recipient by a postal ballot.

Harold S. Lapham, v.p. retired of the Macmillan Co. is now on a world tour. In the autumn of 1952 he plans to become president of the Universalist Church Publishing House (Boston, Mass.) and a roving field editor, a talent scout, for Macmillan Co.

The PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY relates that working for the Macmillan Co. in the non-editorial departments, he wanted to get into this latter section so badly he finally published his own magazine. Editor Edward C. Marsh heard about it and promptly allowed him for trial purposes to move over. He stayed, and eventually headed the department. Watch the vanity press boys make hay out of that one! The joke in it though, is that Mr. Lapham's literary magazine was privately published. A major difference.

The \$100,000 received by the So. Methodist University Press from the SMU football profits is going to materially increase the number of trade books issued by the Press.

The CHRISTIAN CENTURY has issued a vigorous denunciatory analysis of the proposed UMT (Universal Military Training system). This is nothing less than peacetime conscription and compulsory labor for the State. It will take our young men and women from the business of fitting themselves for useful lives in their most formative years. It is giving up our bodies as well as our material property to the communized State. Men working together freely for common good is one thing. Men being forced to contribute their lives, unwillingly, is another. We have the draft, for times of national defense. UMT will put us one step nearer to the intolerable Soviet slave labor form of dictatorship. Would you wish to mortgage your son's or daughter's future at a bank controlled by such politicians as have been making front page banner headlines lately? The very minimum of ordinary good sense suggests this bill should be given "leave to withdraw" at least until after the next national election so soon to be held. We believe the American People should put their collective foot down hard on this as well as the squandering of their wealth.

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### REPORT ON "WHY I WANT TO WRITE"

Here is the second Workshop ms. on "Why I Want to Write". This one also receives that token payment we give to all authors when a ms. is used in REWRITE. I hope that many of the workshop readers will comment on it and also Mrs. Polinski's, which we printed last month. (I am sorry her by-line was inadvertently left off.)

This one is from Mrs. Marjorie McClellan Flint. She lives up in the Vermont hills.

#### WHY I WANT TO WRITE

##### BECAUSE—

I'm miserable if I don't. When the writing goes well, everything falls into line.

I work best alone and am at my best on paper.

Few professions are such ideal "homework". I can combine housework and other activities with writing while I learn. Everything is grist for my mill and serves a two-fold purpose.

I can live where I choose; my markets, conveniently, are as near as the mail-box, & not dependent on Big City contacts, capital or pull.

It promises me at least a small income.

I love to tinker with words, the clever phrase, the apt description. I love to see people come to life beneath my fingers, and do worthwhile things in an environment of my choosing. Even names fascinate me, go down in my notebook under classified headings.

Writing opens the door to a world of interesting people, glamorous places, both real and imaginary.

I believe with my writing I can be of a greater service to the world than in any other way; that I should use my talent for the good of others. Surely that is what we're here for!

Note: I shall not comment on this ms. now except to say: in one or two places I had to fit Mrs. Flint's words into our specialized and rigid type form. Can you guess where? I also am interested in Mrs. Flint's effective use of paragraphing to emphasize her ideas.

#### REWRITE IS YOUR MAGAZINE!

The wisdom of our not scheduling a "prose workshop" during the holidays, was shown in the small number of questions submitted before we went to press. Please do not forget, that the reason why REWRITE is so personalized and practical a magazine, is that we depend upon your individual problems to shape our monthly articles on the technique which is essential to write & sell effectively.

### THIS MONTH'S NEW BOOKS

**MAIN FLEET TO SINGAPORE.** Capt. Russell Grenfell, R.N. The Macmillan Co. \$3.75. This is an absorbing book, because it gives American readers a perspective on the Far East question and the strategy of world peace. Writers can observe the step-by-step development of dramatic conflict and action and reaction according to the laws of character and Cause and Effect. The general reader is free to observe what awful mistakes our leaders made, and that Russia was making the same aggressive noises and threats 50 years ago.

**THE RETURN TO MORALITY.** Sen. Charles W. Tobey Doubleday & Co. \$2.00. This is an interesting and readable little book. Sen. Tobey is sincere in his love of America and his horror over what we are doing to America, some through selfishness, others through neglect and lack of interest. It is not sentimental Sunday School stuff; it is a practical politician talking sense. He has the facts.

#### SOME GOOD ADVICE & SOME MARKETS

**How Not to Make Friends With Editors.** We received a circular recently from a publicity-minded member of the entertainment world who offers prizes to writers able to get her name and picture into magazines. If there's one way to antagonize editors, it is to use them and their space for ulterior purposes. Legitimate news is one thing, but leg art & risque stories is another. It's nice to overcome obstacles, but there is no need to make the steeplechase course any more difficult, and knock yourself out, unnecessarily.

**How Not to Make Friends With Booksellers.** If you order books from small bookshops, especially on special order, and the book arrives direct from the publisher, for Pete's sake don't change your mind and send it back to the publisher without consulting the retail bookseller, who is charged with it and not permitted to return it. Lots of guys do!

**JUNIOR CATHOLIC MESSENGER.** Carol Bueker, 38 West 5th St., Dayton 2, Ohio, reported to a contributor recently via rejection slip, a change of address, as above. It applies, we believe, to the older and younger publications in the MESSENGER family. All of these magazines pay well.

**CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES.** Frances W. Marks., 1018 So. Wabash Ave., Chicago 5, Ill., says it is still practically out of the market—although it had hoped to have reduced heavy inventories by this time.

**Adolph Krook,** long term Chicago bookseller, feels so strongly about the problems of the book business, referred to on P. 9, that he has written a book, "Bookstores Can Be Saved". (\$2., Booksellers' Catalog Service, Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill.) He has advanced 14 proposals for making the business profitable. We believe No. 4 (raise prices) is about as wrong as they come. Lover them!

## REWRITE

### THIS MONTH'S NEWS AT WCS HOUSE

Lots of things happened at WCS House this past month. Post Office managed to lose one shipment of 400 copies of January REWRITE—it finally showed up nearly a week late. So I had to do some frantic hunting, and actual mailing had to be done in two shipments, thus delaying receipt by a few subscribers. This was the first time in eleven years.

But our Lunenburg postmaster helped us in this emergency plus an old fashioned blizzard. His son, "Bud" snowploughed in with an order of groceries and took back one sizable load of REWRITE in time to catch the afternoon mail. By the time the next shipment arrived our driveway was ploughed and a piled up drift of snow had been banked in just the right place to make a perfect take-off for a long, roller-coaster coast. In fact, breaking out the lower part, Papa almost whanged his nose against the Town Shed. It was fast and exciting. The neighboring kids and Billy liked it. (Understatement.)

Then came the January "spring". Billy got a third nasty cold, and Midgey, our kitten, also took sick and had to be put to sleep. As Billy recovered, Elva got the cold, & wrote her page under difficulties (understatement, again). As a result of all of these complications, I am afraid that REWRITE will once more be a few days late in reaching you. But mail deliveries seem to be slower, too.

### UNDERSTAND YOUR PRODUCT

THOUGHT & ACTION (See P. 10 & 11), says it is now "favoring mss. of 500 words or less; poetry of 8 lines or less (space limitations demand this). Also, we intend to appeal specifically to the psychologist, sociologist, and philosopher. We are getting away from a broad, general appeal because we appreciate that we cannot possibly compete with the many bigger and better general appeal magazines."

We feel that is good sense and a thought, that many writers might well take to heart. You have to deliver a product that some one reader or group of readers desires sufficiently to pay out money to own. But you will prosper much better financially and artistically if you do not try to compete in a common and over-crowded rut, but rather seek to establish your own individual uniqueness. A better mouse-trap, not a stranger, more bohemian and more hideous hair-do.

Many writers feel that they can get ahead faster in the world of print by forcing editors to "see" them. (Some use publicity instead of hair-dos. And the most pathetic of all substitute vanity pressed books.) Curiously, though, it is always the words that you put down on paper, which interest editors. That is a yardstick you just can't escape. And it is the most relentless one because almost everyone can manage to (1) look queer; (2) get "handles" or develop news of

a kind about themselves that the local paper will print; (3) send pay for the publication of what Elva calls their "indiscretions". But try as hard as they will, some "writers" just can't find the wherewithal within themselves to get good, strong, publishable "ideas" or words down on paper. Have not you seen many a writer who has spent his or her whole life "belonging" to writers' clubs or joining committees yet never writing a word?

Jessyca Russell, publisher of the WRITERS' NEWSLETTER, Box 261, Madison Square Sta. NYC 10, called our attention to an obvious mis-statement that crept into the January issue. The editor of another writers' magazine referred to REWRITE as the only one that carries no ads. and for the moment we believed it despite the fact that we read WNL every month 12 times a year. Just shows what a need there is for every implication of each and every word you write to be re-examined.

Mrs. Bess Messinger, Tacoma writer, moved down to 7308 48th St., N. E., Seattle, Wash., recently. I hope the neighbors down therein Seattle will call on her. (And not the way, please, that tradition used to say they did in Cambridge, Mass. My mother was told by a witty and observing "faculty wife", when she first moved into Cambridge: "Now, my dear, do not expect anyone to call on you. No one does until you've lived here seven years. And by then you don't care if they do not.")

TRUE CONFESSIONS, Poetry Editor, 67 W. 44th St., NYC 18, states on her rejection slip, "Unfortunately, our market is limited, since we only publish 4 poems in each issue."

Many poets are not aware that the Confession and Love story fields are good markets for certain types of verse. And they're excellently paying markets, too.

U.S.A., The Magazine of Am. Affairs, 444 Madison Ave., NYC, is a new pocket magazine scheduled for publication soon. Ed Maher, a former LIBERTY editor, is the editor, & the publisher is the National Association of Manufacturers. The signs are, therefore, it'll be slick in appearance and writing, and conservative and serious in its slant. But you will need to watch it and analyze it—carefully.

MEN, Empire State Bldg., NYC 1, is another magazine, issued by the publishers whose STAG and MALE have sought to compete against the older ESQUIRE, and other men's magazines

Trouble with this field is it's more sharply departmentalized and divided than the women's field. There is no common denominator such as the love story and the home & beauty types of articles. The men's circulation is much smaller than the women's. And it's divided between the men of affairs, sophisticates and rugged adventure lovers. You need to know much more carefully exactly what you are shooting at. Pay is more moderate, too.

## REWRITE

### SOME CONTESTS, & A NEW MARKET

Editor, YALE SERIES FOR YOUNGER POETS, Yale University Press, New Haven, Conn. This annual competition for poets under 40 is open between Feb. 1 and March 1, 1952. Books are published on a royalty basis.

SCHOLASTIC Magazines, Kenneth M. Gould, 7 E. 12th St., NYC 3, offers prizes in 23 classifications for junior & senior high schools. In N.E. rules booklets available from cooperating newspaper (Boston POST) Closes February 15, 1952. (This is an annual contest.)

POETRY AWARDS, The Editor, Box 388, Occidental College, Los Angeles 41, Cal. There are 3 classifications: Closes: (Annually). Collegiate Poetry: \$100, \$50 & \$25 for best undergraduate poems published or selected by competition in 1951. Closes: Jan. 15. Magazine Poetry: \$300, \$200 & \$100 for best poems under 50 lines published in magazines or an anthology. Editors are supposed to select the 5 best in their magazines. Editors of Poetry Awards may enter others. The best 25 are republished in POETRY AWARDS annually. Closes: Jan. 15. Book-Length Poetry: \$1,250 for the best ms. not previously submitted elsewhere. Thirty poems or less and 60 or 70 pages (top length) of which one-half may have been published in magazines (not in book form). P.A. may consider other books than those submitted (they must be submitted anonymously). Closes July 1, 1952, and annually. (Former competition, for one full-length poem has been eliminated.) Periodic check for change of rules, by requesting the latest announcement is wise. Closes: Jan. 15.

AMERICAN POETRY LEAGUE, Marie L. & Clarence O. Adams, 7077 W. 24th Ave., Gary, Ind., offers \$15, \$10 & \$5 (and also book & magazine prizes) to its members for original, unpublished poems (not over 28 lines). Closes on June 30, 1952. Membership is by invitation, sent out in January & July. (Bill & Elva are on the membership lists and also contribute prize subscriptions to REWRITE. We are glad to recommend competent poets. The dues have always been very nominal, and the benefits, the pleasure and profit of working cooperatively on a number of worthwhile projects—including criticism, are worth more than that.

FANTASTIC WORLDS, Edward W. Ludwig, 1942 Telegraph Ave., Stockton, Cal., is a new science-fiction magazine. The editor is a long-term member of the WCS Family and has written a lot of s-f and fantasy stuff himself. A 5x8" job (offset like REWRITE), it will use fantasy, science- and weird fiction, 500 to 2,000 words. "We especially want satire and stories that are usually taboo or off-trail for the large circulation mags. Articles to feature background material in the field: biographies of writers, news of fantasy organizations, a limited amount on the unknown & supernatural. Query first on articles. Payment in prizes (\$5 to \$10) as determined by reader vote. More in exceptional cases. Al-

Continued on P. 10

### THE BOOK BUSINESS IS YOUR BUSINESS

Trouble with "the Book Business". The New York HERALD TRIBUNE quotes a delegate to the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture's conference on rural reading: "Right now 40% of the citizens, in Kansas, do not have access to libraries. Town after town has no book store. People are not reading books. They have no books to buy. They aren't seeing books in libraries."

Something should be done about this! (It's one reason why we started the WRITERS' BOOK CLUB.) As a book author you're losing money!

Here's Something That Will Help—a Lot! A charge of 30¢ is now being made by the Macmillan Company against the bookseller, when he dares to ask this publisher to ship pick-up orders for a single book direct to a retail customer. Repeat: 30¢ on every single, one-book order the retail bookseller doesn't graciously allow to be mailed to him, so he can remail it and—keep his customer waiting up to a month for his book!

Note: 60% of the book business is said to consist today of orders from booksellers of 1 to 2 copies of a book. Book stores all over the country are going out of business. A plain answer to this charge on the part of a lot of retail booksellers will be not to display books on which they are thus penalized and wherever possible, to urge their customers to buy books from publishers who don't make it so hard for them to stay in the business. Macmillan Co. claims it loses money on these small sales and extra service. But in a good many instances this kind of "pick-up" order can be part of a total retail order of as much as \$50 to \$100 in books. The WRITERS' BOOK CLUB has had many such orders, in which out of 20 titles no two could be purchased from the same publisher.

This kind of penalty is going to hurt the hardest those writers whose books don't enjoy spectacular sales, but do sell considerably over the years. Whose readers are small town readers out in the rural areas that publishers too often don't understand and don't do much about cultivating. If they did, this kind of discriminatory book merchandising—a sure method for committing suicide—would not be necessary. In a word, if my publisher were the Macmillan Co., I would definitely express my thought on this subject, & do it in plain, forceful language. I'd do that also to all the many other publishers whose short discounts, extra charges for insurance and special handling, etc. hedge in or tend to restrict my book's sales.

Publishers have to be practical businessmen. Each title ought in general to earn its way, and writers should write rather than be too much concerned with telling their editors & publishers how to run the business. A great need exists, however, for standardizing publishing accounting practices. Writers live and grow to the extent that their ideas

Continued on P. 10

## REWRITE

Continued from P. 9, Column 1.  
so, interested in seeing artwork, cartoons, poetry, although we can't guarantee payment for these, at first." It's a quarterly, 25¢ per copy, \$1 a year. The two other editors, Sam Sackett and Ordean A. Hagen, are writers and teachers of writing. We wish 'em luck.

### PUBLISHING IS SERIOUS BUSINESS!

THOUGHT & ACTION (See: P. 11). The intentions of the editors are good, just as we believed them to be. Accepting our criticism of the contest entry fee in the spirit in which it was intended, the editors have announced that a new set of rules will be offered for the existing contest in their February number. Prize winners will be listed in April, and the entry fee will be refunded in every case where it has been paid. Entries between now and March 15, 1952 (the closing date) do not need to send an entry fee.

More important, cash prizes have been added to those already announced. \$3 for first prize winner, and \$1 each for second & third prize winners. The editors state they had no intention of asking writers to buy anything in order to compete. Further, they feel the point we have made on P. 11 is a good one to emphasize. (I have allowed that paragraph to ride instead of our killing it, because the basic principle applies to all contests for which an entry fee is required. We are happy that REWRITE's friendly intervention has brought more satisfactory conditions, and a better opportunity for writers to gain cash and experience. I congratulate the editors, who have accepted our suggestions so manfully.)

Magazines Not Edited From Thin Air. At the same time I would like to stress that magazines, particularly small, experimental magazines (REWRITE included), are not especially exempted from the present inflation spiral. Carrying few or no ads., these magazines—particularly so far as contests are concerned—must find the money to stay in business somewhere.

As the editor of THOUGHT & ACTION expresses it, such magazines survive only on "private philanthropy—this is a pretty way for saying that the money most men squander on a blonde or in saloons, we prefer to put into our magazine. No sneer here, nothing virtuous in this—just a matter of preference. Or as an old, kind-hearted philosophy prof. of mine might say, 'a sounder weighing of values'." In other words, if you want magazines like REWRITE and THOUGHT & ACTION, get your friends to support them and read them!

AMERICAN WEEKLY, Charles Robbins, 63 Vesey St., NYC 7, is the magazine section, for the Hearst Sunday papers. It uses features, rather specialized in styling. Newsy, too.

More Re: Envelops. In self-defense we had to raise our price on small quantities. For larger quantities, the same low prices.

Continued from P. 9, Column 2.  
fall on rich ground and take root. They cannot do this, if they are not effectively nurtured by the publisher. Our selling books by way of the WRITERS' BOOK CLUB has been a revealing and often disillusioning experience when viewed from the angle of the writer. As a featured book columnist who was so successful in selling people on the idea of reading that publishers swamped me with books which they wished me to comment on, and booksellers complained because I featured books they did not have in stock when their customers, curiously, asked for them, I had always felt books were not widely enough distributed. I know now that (1) books do not reach all of the potential readers they should; (2) there are not nearly enough retail booksellers in the country and what there are are too concentrated in small areas of reading confined mainly to cities and suburban areas. (3) The merchandising techniques of bookselling are outmoded, wasteful and inefficient. It's perfectly true that writers have a full time job on their hands just being sure that the publishers and booksellers are given good product to sell. Many of the would-be novelists have no alibi other than their own incompetence to blame for their failure to sell, or even place their mass. But just the same, I know that because of the conditions listed above, many books are not getting sales, sales to which they are rightfully entitled and by the same yardstick the authors aren't getting their ideas spread around the world the way they should. I think this is too bad and that writers should have at least a professional knowledge of and interest in this highly technical business of getting a book into the hands of the right reader, and all of the readers who would enjoy its ideas. It is an important element in their success.

## THE FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

FTC has filed an order (prohibiting further misrepresentation) against Radio Training Association of America, Los Angeles, Cal.

FTC has issued a complaint against Universal Educational Guild Inc., Brooklyn, N.Y. and a string of affiliates throughout the U.S., charging "deception of the public in the sale of 'World Scope Encyclopaedia'". This company's salesmen used a contract with the publisher of RADIO BEST & TELEVISION Mag. (it is now known as TV SCREEN) to sledge that a poll was being conducted. FTC claims: "Sole purpose of the poll is to enable the respondents' salesmen to gain admission to homes & sell the encyclopaedia".

## WE STILL HAVE ENVELOPS

Although our supplies are dwindling we've got plenty of three sizes of envelops, sizes which we use ourselves and find very convenient. The 10x13 size, & the one-fold sizes.

26 10x13 (Flat) \$1.00. 50 Same \$1.85.  
20 Each One-fold sizes, \$1.00. 50 Each \$2.  
Postage Extra. We'll refund extra in envelope.

## REWRITE

### A LOT OF NEWS AND COMMENT

Some Interesting Figures. EDITOR AND PUBLISHER, newspaper trade magazine reported recently that "religion is becoming 'page one copy'", and Benn Hall Associates amplified, giving statistics on the growth of RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE. In 1933 it began by servicing a few church papers. Today it serves around 700 clients (125 dailies, 350 religious publications, 150 radio stations & miscellaneous magazines and weeklies). It has a staff of 16 writers in NYC, supplemented by about 500 correspondents and 300 photographers around the country. (That's pretty formidable competition, but free lancers do sell RNS & remember, there must be some turn-over with all that "staff". An alert writer might develop a place for himself. Could be you.)

PROOF, Box 190, North Hollywood, Cal., has merged its three magazines (Proof, which is about "graphics", Galley, about Little magazines, and Preview, about the movies). The single magazine is known as PREVIEW; it covers everything.

THOUGHT & ACTION, Roy E. Hessen, Jefferson Ave., Amityville, N.Y., a small experimental magazine still in its first year, offers subscriptions and merchandise as prizes for the best mss. (any subject, fact or fiction and between 90 and 110 words) submitted before March 15, 1952. There's an entry fee (we told the editor we did not like that). It's only 20¢, but that means some lose so a few may win (the lottery angle). In this case I believe the editor's intentions are good.

The CATHOLIC HOME JOURNAL, Fr. Urban S. Adelman, Pittsburgh, Pa., lists 6 reasons it rejects on the small, but carefully edited, and instructional rejection slip it encloses with returned mss. (1) No appeal; (2) writing unsatisfactory; (3) subject deals "with living personalities"; (4) material of same type already on hand; (5) material merely a piece of entertainment without "implicitly" pointing a moral; (6) ms. exceeds the magazine's top length of 2,000 words. A limited market of 32 pages, this magazine seeks the "home" type of material.

NEA Service, Marguerite Lowe, 1200 W. 3rd St., Cleveland 13, Ohio, told a writer that it is not in the market for juvenile stories at the present time.

Harvey Comics are staff-written. McClure Syndicate told a writer it had really considered going back into the market for short shorts, but had decided not to (December).

Christian Education Co., Martin P. Simon, Highland, Ill., publisher of CHRISTIAN PARENT and MY CHUM, has upped its rate from 4¢ to 5¢.

Quickie Reprints. We've noticed pieces by our friends reprinted or commented upon recently. In one case a newspaper reprinted a

short article by a REWRITE reader, crediting both the author and the magazine that bought the piece originally. In another instance, a woman's magazine that is digest in character and has had a number of changes of editors, merely lifted the cream in a paragraph or two.

Editors stress the publicity value of the reprint. If your eyes are sharp, you'll see which magazines feed out to the daily papers a syndicated sort of teaser that appears to be news, but which really lures the papers' readers to buy the magazine. The author receives no profit from this kind of reduplication of his ideas. Indeed, on the contrary it tends to spoil any further use of the idea from a different slant. We believe that organizations such as the Authors' League of America and the National Writers' Club must eventually help writers to form some kind of restrictions against such indiscriminate use of an author's bread and butter. At the very least it should mean a higher rate.

The reason why all writers' organizations should take this matter seriously is that it is dangerous in setting up a precedent. If one magazine can syndicate a piece or a portion of it, under the guise of publicity, a neighboring magazine can release radio or TV versions for the same reason, until a writer's secondary rights become valueless. The POST, for instance, buys all rights and returns second rights after 60 days. But during that time it permits newspapers considerable license under the cliche lead, which begins: "The POST will say tomorrow"—. The other big magazines do the same. True they pay well, but the smaller magazines do not, and the newspapers are notorious lifters of material.

The rules clearly need to be tightened. If a local story is "picked up" by the AP, INS, UP, that is supposed to be an honor, but you don't get a thin dime more. And the story has been ruined for wider use on a specialized, magazine basis. If memory serves, the playwrights, through the Dramatists' Guild, have agreements as to how their plays may be rehearsed without royalty or used for publicity purposes. If a benefit performance gets worked into the schedule, it is with the approval and consent of the author and several unions. But at present the rules for material in other fields all work for the publishers.

REWRITE's recent suggestion that the Authors' League of America and the National Writers' Club ought to work together, and "draw in the loyalties and strength of the thousands of part-time writers who belong to neither organization," drew a quick response from David Raffelock, director of N.W.C. He placed the idea before his members in the Club bulletin and the Club is preparing a report to be submitted to the Authors' League. I sincerely hope this will result in action. We at REWRITE will, obviously, back it strongly.

### REWRITE

It is only fair to say that Dave made the important commentary that "There are far too many writers who are unwilling to cooperate, to pay dues, to do their share". There are some writers, especially among the non-selling ones, who work under financially stringent circumstances. Nevertheless, Dave has a strong point. It is the rank and file rather than the leadership that is to blame. Until writers are strong and cooperate for the common good, there will be the same weakness that there is inherent in our democracy. We tend to let the other fellow do it. And as the professional politicians in both political parties have amply proven, the chap who accepts the responsibility is not always to be trusted. Where indifference persists.

In the writing field there is no question as to the loyalty and the devotion of those men and women, who have worked unceasingly, to advance and protect the rights of author and writer. It is as Dave says, they simply are not strong enough to compell better recognition of writers' rights.

Does Cooperative Publishing Pay? The January issue of NWC's AUTHORSHIP contains the most challenging discussion of this point I've seen in a long time. NWC, like REWRITE recognizes that many worthwhile books cannot be profitable in today's publishing market. If an author is to get published therefore, he must either (1) publish his book himself, or (2) subsidize a publisher. Legitimate firms are the only firms which can do this job on an honest basis. Mere printers have not the facilities for distribution (i.e., selling). The vanity firms do "subsidized" publishing openly, whereas the legitimate houses do occasional jobs with their hands hidden. The only legitimate publishers who face the situation honestly, are the university presses which admit that many scholarly books simply must be financed either by the author, some foundation or the department he works for.

The fundamental weakness of the firms that are trying to cover their "subsidized" publishing with an aroma of respectability, is summed up by Dave Raffelock: "If these self-styled 'cooperative' publishers consistently maintained a respectable level of merit, a good deal of the opprobrium or skepticism regarding such books would be removed. Such standards may come to be accepted, but up to now the fact remains that as yet they've not been."

To this REWRITE heartily subscribes. Only yesterday we were called by long distance on the telephone. (One of these "subsidy" firms wished to convince me it was doing an above board, practical job for its clients.) This publisher talked with me for more than half an hour. I told him I have no prejudices. My only interest lies in seeing that writers—any writers who use any service, get a dollar's worth of value for every dollar which they invest. In the course of the conversation this publisher told me how his firm is

getting recognition from the critics & book stores for his clients. He also admitted in all frankness he publishes a lot of bad, i.e., "unpublishable" books. His reasons? He has a high overhead cost of doing business, and if he didn't do the books, someone else would. I regretted the high cost of the conversation. The publisher said it would "not cost me a dime; my authors will pay for it. And it will be a good investment, if I convince you that we are doing a square job". He invited me to come to NYC, at his expense, "to pull the place apart, if you wish to". I refused to be placed under such an obligating pressure. He did not consider it an obligation.

My mind is still open. As a reporter, who seeks the unvarnished truth, I consider only whether (1) any service offered to writers appears to be reputable; (2) whether in the case of a publisher or critic-agent, or agent, it appears able to do the job offered; and (3) whether that job, if done, will benefit or hurt the writer's life reputation as a professional craftsman. (There are many instances where authors of distinction have been embarrassed by the books they paid for when they were still unknown. We would certainly be poor counsellors if, knowing this, we permitted our friends to be maneuvered, or to slip unawares, into such a position.) So, in the final analysis you are the judge of the facts as we give them to you. As reporters we only do the research. It is up to you to decide whether a publisher such as the one mentioned above can make cooperative or subsidized publishing pay for you.

Doubleday Editor Moves Up. Isabelle Taylor CRIME CLUB editor since 1939, has been named Chief Associate Editor of Doubleday & Co. She will continue in charge of CRIME CLUB.

Wilfred Funk, Inc., 33 West 46th St., NYC 19. This is a new address for this book publishing firm.

Contest Editor. The VILLAGER, Bronxville Women's Club, Bronxville, N. Y., offers annually prizes for stories, articles, poems, sketches. This year, in that order, prizes: \$50, \$40, \$25 (two), and \$10, respectively. Only in poetry are there two prizes. But as space permits other mss. are used in the magazine throughout the year. No pay for these. The Villager has won a high degree of prestige in the past for its high quality & untiring devotion to the interests of promising writers.

"Great Books" Program for the Theater. A study guide, "Living Theatre", has been prepared by Am. National Theatre & Academy, 245 West 52nd St., NYC, at the request of the Am. Association of University Women for discussion of great American & Foreign plays. It's available at 50¢ (discount on quantities) to the general public. A companion volume that brings together the texts of the plays will follow in the spring. (Twayne Publishers.)

## REWRITE

### WE RECOMMEND WRITERS, NOT AGENTS

Frequently we are asked by writers kindly to suggest and recommend some literary agent or agents, who can "handle this ms. (or "my mss.") profitably for me." Most often, this request is prompted by a book ms. (that too often has already been submitted to several publishers and has been turned down!) Less often, it is the old story of a writer, who believes an agent can do for a group of the author's short stories what the writer can't do—sell them. It is true that writers often pick the wrong market to shoot at. But ninety-nine times out of a hundred (actually, I think the percentage is .999) the questioner does not (1) consider whether the writing quality of the material ready for presentation is first grade; or (2) whether the merchandise he has to offer might be profitable to an agent.

Because our reputations as editors and as writers' counsel are at stake, we never undertake to recommend agents to writers. On the contrary, we recommend a very few writers to agents. We know plenty of agents. We can distinguish between legitimate and reputable (and usually non-advertising) agents and the generally less reputable "critic-agents" and "collaborators", who transpose & touch up mss. for a fee in addition to that usual 10% that legitimate agents charge. A number of agents are our friends, and quite a few subscribe to REWRITE. But they would, probably, be the first to testify that that does not earn them a preference, and further that our recommendations of writers have been few and far between.

We feel that it does no particular writer any good for us to compliment him falsely by giving him the names of agents, when he has no possible chance of interesting an agent. We might be able to fool him and the agent for a little while. But actually we are doing a disservice to him and to all writers. Not to mention that we are putting our firm in the position of the lad who cried, "Wolf, wolf!" too many times. We can always make a mistake out of honest enthusiasm. But if we get the reputation of trying to push off an unready writer on a busy agent, pretty soon our recommendation won't be worth much.

That is something agents themselves guard against all the time (the good ones, that is of course). If an editor trusts their judgment, he is half-sold when they bring him a proposition. That's why the critic-agents—so-called—are a snare and a delusion. They invariably send out too many mss., hoping against hope that some of these will "stick". As a result, editors don't trust their judgment in many cases.

Here are some documented manoeuvres which tricky critic-agents have been known to play on gullible writers. (We know of actual instances illustrating each of them.) One "agent" in order to justify a reading fee be-

fore the ms. was submitted generally to editors, would wangle a written refusal by an editor, giving reasons for rejection. Then this agent had tangible evidence that such a ms. was unsalable, but also that she'd tried to unload. (This story was told me by an editor who had thus been victimized and was pretty sore about it.)

Another trick is to hold a ms. or mss. in the files for a year or more and give no accounting to the author. When he at last asks for one, a list of submissions is compiled, together with a letter of "real regret" the ms. just didn't have the appeal value necessary to force an editor to accept them. Again, it is the writer's "fault", not the agent's. And "you see, we tried". It is very hard for a writer to prove that mss. in such cases have not been submitted. And very often, if they have, it would have been better for the author's reputation, if they had not! (We have had writers tell us that they checked such a list with the editors & were told the ms. had not been submitted.)

It is very easy for a "collaborator", who revises a ms. or has his "staff" do it, under his direction, to wriggle out of a responsibility for inferior work. Few writers who turn to such ready-made means of crashing markets, can tell whether the revise is better or worse than the original. The collaborator can think up a dozen reasons that explain why his expert treatment didn't earn an acceptance. The editor reported, "We already have one in the house", or the market for that type has passed, etc., etc., etc.

One of the nastiest devices for "ducking" responsibility is the trick of recommending a writer to a vanity publisher. (We have in our files actual reports of cases where the critic-agent collected commissions from both the writer and the publisher! (We have been offered that kind of money, but have refused in no uncertain terms. We never accept an agent's commission in the first place, & we never accept commissions from agents or publishers in the second place. Or gifts.) One teacher told us, quite unabashed, once of his arrangement for getting his best pupils published in an "author subsidized" anthology.

Just as we do not like to recommend writers who are not ready, or are not producing enough material to be profitable to an agent, similarly, we do not consider it ethical to recommend mss. with which we are not familiar, to agents. A writer can jibe at this, of course, that this is a means of cutting ourselves in for a fee. It isn't true of course. For how can we honestly tell the reader he's got a ms. worth looking at, and the author, on the other hand, that he's got something?

In a very few instances, we have recommended writers to agents on their general writing ability, carefully stipulating that the particular ms. has not been read. But the occasions when this has led to a sale are few

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and far between. Usually, the particular ms. has not been sold, but the agent and writer have "got together" on something else. This only proves our contention, that the writer-agent relationship is a two-way one. And so the more writers think of it in this manner and act accordingly, the more they will improve their own chances for ultimate, lasting success in the most difficult portion of writing, which is selling. We have found over the years that our extreme caution regularly loses us some friends, but it has increased our ability to serve both writers & agents. And in the final analysis, the respect with which any professional counsellor is held by editors and agents, is his largest stock-in-trade for really helping writers.

## BACKGROUND FOR THE NEWS

Elinor Brown, co-editor of The Archer, sent us a clip from a California newspaper, that is of interest to all writers. Gist of the report is that an author's right to characters he may create, was upheld by a federal court. Warner Brothers filmed Dashiell Hammett's "The Maltese Falcon", then claimed he could not sell the MC to more than one medium of entertainment. (Hammett sold further rights to the original novel, this time for a radio serial. Warner Brothers claimed infringement of its rights.

A federal court, however, ruled that serial based on "other activities" of the novel's hero did not infringe on the movie. The point is that under Warner Brothers' interpretation, all stories about a popular figure such as "Sherlock Holmes", "Elliott Queen" or what-have-you, could be tied up by dramatization of one story, or installment.

Drama On the Grand Scale. A news release reaching our desk recently told what's happening to a new book, "Brain-Washing In Red China: The Calculated Destruction of Men's Minds" by Edward Hunter. The title is something to set any writer thinking! And shuddering? But apparently in the relentless battles between the free world and the slave world several steps are being taken. (1) even before publication a special paper-bound edition was ordered by our State Department for distribution to the peoples of the Far East (India & Indonesia, for example). (2) The Committee for a Free Asia is offering gratis copies to all Chinese students now attending colleges and universities in this country.. (3) The same organization is publishing its own Chinese language edition for distribution widely throughout the Far East. (4) The Charles E. Tuttle Co. is doing still another version in English for sale in Japan.

Somewhat this news item stirs one's mind in several directions. It dramatizes the fight that is going on between civilization & barbarianism. Whether we like it or not, we're right back in the last days of the Roman Empire. Any talk about a truce in Korea seems

naive and unrealistic in the face of such a basic struggle for survival. We have got to find some method for destroying war—before it destroys us. And the present conflict is not merely a question of "winning" a war. It is a matter of recovering our moral principles and stamina. Of driving back, and destroying utterly the ruthless and sadistic instincts in men. A job for writers there?

We can do this only by a long, slow, systematic education of ourselves and the peoples of the backward countries. We must educate ourselves to the passionate hungers & elementary needs of the Asiatic hordes. At the same time we must educate them, raising them patiently, generation by generation, to our level of a creative, peace-loving way of life. Obviously, writers can play an important role in that dramatic story.

In the meantime, we have to fight the delaying action that will overturn the Soviet bid for world enslavement. We must do it in terms of force, the only language they comprehend. But we must also do it in terms of maintaining our standards and extending our goals. Here, again, writers can play an inestimable part. As you help to clarify them make them more inspiring to our own people & those waiting impatiently for liberation of the spirit, you help to win the great unending battle for human rights everywhere, and for yourself. It is at this level that treasonous treachery by greedy public officials and private "me firsters" appears so shocking, when viewed in acid contrast to men of the stamp of Capt. Kurt Carlsen.

We must be strong physically. But we must be strong, too, mentally and emotionally. We must temper our strength with justice & innate idealism. (This article was started before Dr. Bennett's moving editorial came to us.) The Point 4 program has received abuse and ridicule. There is nothing wrong in it. If there is, then we had better scrap all of our religious missionary programs. For their goal is practically the same. No, it's what we do with our generosity and helpfulness & practical know-how that matters. In fairness to ourselves as well as those we attempt to help, we must be enlightened administrators. We must seek to be guided by those facts, & principles enunciated by Dr. Bennett. And we must demand of our friends as much as we do of ourselves. In New England, we know it is no good to help a man mow his hay, if it is going to make him lazy and dependent on his neighbors. It's only good business to aid a man if you help him to help himself, & stir up in him the creative urge to build a better home, a better world to live in. The abundant life comes only with hard & fruitful toil. Writers can do much to clarify the issues and help us and our friends to be alive.

But finally, we must love the creative, & stimulating life implicit in our ideals. And surely you writers can write of and about & from that well-spring of power. Try it!

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### THE "WHY" OF SINGLE VIEWPOINT

One of the most difficult things for most beginning writers to learn is the necessity of keeping to a single viewpoint in a short story. The reasons why they can't or do not wish to are legion. They range from ineptitude to fancied artistic craftsmanship. The critic can only offer his opinion, and, more important, his experience. But the editor—less obliging and shorter with words, can & does send his rejection slip. The fact that he does not bother to explain why, is often regrettable, but nonetheless justifiable. He does not have the time to teach every writer how to practice his craft.

The reason why in 99 cases out of 100 your chosen viewpoint in the story should be one single viewpoint is a pedestrian practical one. The reader wants to "live" the story—to identify himself with one of the characters, to see and hear and feel the dramatic right-here-and-now action as if it were his own. Obviously, he cannot do this if in one scene he is one character, in another a second and in a third still another character. Full enjoyment of a story and full participation are the strongest arguments for that single viewpoint that the nasty old critics and textbooks are always calling for. To achieve full enjoyment and full participation it is almost obligatory to keep to a single viewpoint. At least it is very true what any number of reputable agents have insisted on repeatedly, namely, that a writer ought always to keep to the single viewpoint—until he has thoroughly mastered it. And that, of course, means until he can sell about as he wishes to. In other words, until he is able to point to a market and then write a story for it that will stick. And do this repeatedly over a period of months.

Just for the record, let's define two important words. VIEWPOINT: the point of view of that character you, the author, select as the MC and about whom you wish to tell this particular story. ANGLE OF NARRATION. Your point of view for telling the story. You do not necessarily need to be in the MC's mind to tell it from his viewpoint. It can be his story directly, or it can be his indirectly. Participating characters, or even observing characters who merely sit on the sidelines, are capable of telling the story about an MC. It is still his story and the reader thinks only of the MC with whom he identifies himself. Finally, the author can use the "fly-on-the-wall" viewpoint of the author seeing all, hearing all and feeling all in the interest of the MC.

This latter angle is a difficult one. The inexperienced writer finds it almost impossible to distinguish between an "invisible" author who is partially omniscient, but remaining outside the story, and the unskilled one, who steps in and moves the characters hither and yon according to his own arbitrary inclinations. Yet the first tells a

living, emotionalized story, while the second merely makes flat statements about a set of wooden characters.

Let me review for you the fundamentals of viewpoint. I will try to show you the easiest ways of using it. If you can master the half-dozen or so principles lined up in the following paragraphs, there should never be any confusion in your mas. with respect to a problem in viewpoint. Remember, keep your eye eternally on the reader.

(1) MC'S Viewpoint. You pretend you are the real MC. You report in his own words and own thoughts exactly what you see and hear, and most important of all, feel. This does not, of course, call for constant and continuous reflection by the MC about the situation. On the contrary, you re-act (in your mind's eye) exactly as you would, for example, when you go into court to explain that you were most certainly not speeding through an intersection. Or when you propose to your best girl or prepare to settle with your wife, who is desirous of going to Reno. You live according to the natural laws of human existence, the best scene you can create.

(A) Subjective to yourself. You go inside your own mind. You reflect, when the dramatic action stirs and stimulates you. You do and act and plan the best you know how.

(B) Objective to all others. You never go inside the other characters. You face them, just as you would in real life. You listen, observe, pick up crumbs of information, and interpret them as you would in real life. In dramatic, realistic scenes you try to fight for and achieve the goals you have set out to gain.

(2) Participating Character's Viewpoint. The same rules apply here as in the MC's angle. The difference lies in that word "angle". A character outside the MC is telling the story instead of the MC. It is still the latter's story, but we've shifted the angle, to get a better perspective. A modest man can't recount a hero's deed, or tell what happened after he died. Sometimes more suspense is created if a character who does not know everything at first, tells the story. Bear in mind the (A) and (B) factors. Now you can go into the story-teller's mind, but not that of the MC!

(3) Observing Character's Viewpoint. You've moved one step nearer the sidelines. Again, the same rules of (A) and (B) apply.

(A) Observing Character visible. He tells the story at the time it happens. He is on the stage, but he takes no part. Again, the angle and the perspective is what counts.

(B) Observing Character invisible. Now he is independent of time and place. He may be telling the story years after it happened.. He is freer than in the previous angles. He

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### HOW TO WRITE AN INTERVIEW

From the editorial viewpoint the interview is one of the most popular forms of the feature article. It has everything that a good feature needs to attract attention. It has color, human interest and is almost without exception readable. Men and women everywhere like to read about how other folk have succeeded and what they can do and like. Dale Carnegie once gave expression to the universal formula in the theme of one of his most popular books, "little known facts about well known people and well known facts about little known people".

The first job therefore, in writing an interview is to ask yourself why you are getting it. What makes it newsworthy, interesting, important? It may be that the prospect has done something that lands him on Page 1. Or he may simply be a Personality temporarily residing in your community. His job in life may be unusual; perhaps he is about to give a famous series of lectures, attend an important conference. It may even be that a feature editor is hard up for copy or knows your man is always good for a story.

At any rate the reason why you seek an interview will be the basis for your lead. To the degree that you can build this up legitimately without making it seem forced, your story will take on a fine spire of meaning, and will pique your readers' interest. The skilled feature writer unobtrusively "sells" his reader throughout every piece he writes. But he is especially careful both in a lead and in the first two or three paragraphs, to advance by implication cogent reasons why the article is a "must" and should be read. If he does it well, this bit of technical artifice has the double advantage of hooking not only the ultimate reader, but also the editor when he considers whether or not to run the piece.

The actual writing of an interview is the least of your worries. Although it may frequently involve the exercise of considerable imagination and the niceties of weighing the varying dramatic values of your material, I can assure you that much of the real work is done before you ever even see the interview subject. You should of course look him up in "Who's Who?" and read any newspaper clips or other material that is available. If he has published books, you should at least make a careful study of their sequence and relation to his work and the probable line your story will take. (In this regard it is wise to keep an open mind until the very end as to a good means of angling your story. Let your unfolding interest in the subject suggest it.) And you ought to try so far as possible, to understand the background and proper relation to the world in which he and you live. It's impossible, of course, to become an expert, or to achieve the sense of perspective that goes with it, in a number of widely separate fields in a comparatively short time. You can

though, be an intelligent reporter who asks sensible questions and adds up the facts in a practical manner.

Good interviewing requires concentration, quick thinking and an agreeable manner. Plan any interview as carefully as you may in advance, you will nevertheless be called upon to alter the order and character of the questions you had planned to ask. The trick is to study your man, and show him as quickly as is possible that you're a responsible and intelligent reporter; that your aim is to learn, and present his ideas to the public as squarely with the facts as you can. Every interviewee will present a different problem. Some will be friendly, others pompous or wish to have you flatter them. Some will be downright unfriendly or suspicious; perhaps they've had an unfortunate experience with some earlier interviewer, who was an incompetent. Whatever the facts, it is up to you to manage a smooth interview. If you can win their respect and confidence, they open up and trust you. In that case the battle is half-won.

You will have to quickly size up the situation. Some interviewees tend to become garrulous. It is up to you to steer the conversation along the lines you wish to develop. You must get all the facts you want and get them usually the first and only time. Some of the men and women you interview are busy folk; you must use the time they give you as efficiently as possible. And if they simply won't talk, you have got to crack them open somehow. (I once got a great publisher to be decent by embarrassing him and making him mad as a wet hen in front of his business associates. That was a desperate last resort, but it worked. It might not under different circumstances.) But it is vital that whatever the conditions you understand what facts you need, and that you get them.

Finally, you must possess the imagination and the intelligence to use the material you have collected, to the best advantage. Your duty is not only to tell a dramatic or interesting story, but also to inform the public about whatever matter the interview is concerned with. In a sense you are a fact-finder and the general reading public will form its opinion as a result of what you write. A flippant, irresponsible manner besides being extremely irritating to the thoughtful reader, can do irreparable harm, because it can misinform him and give him very biased or prejudiced opinion. A careful, experienced, constructively minded feature writer can be a real force for good in his community. He can exert as much, if not more, influence as the strongest editorial writer. This is because like the news reporter, he is dealing with the actual materials of life. And particularly in the interview he is giving active expression to the views of one or more members of the community. That is why a good reporter always remains self-effusive, trying to present to the best of his ability the picture of his subject, and not his own.